

*February 4, 2009*

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) continued his effort to ensure health insurance coverage for 11 million children. McNerney introduced the State Children's Health Insurance Program Extension Act of 2009 (SCHIP Extension Act) today. "Every young child deserves a healthy start in life," said Rep. McNerney. "I was proud to cast a vote that passed the House on January 14. A similar version of this bill passed the House earlier this year on January 14. The Senate passed its version of the bill on January 14. The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children who are not covered by their parents. "Because of this legislation," Rep. McNerney continued, "health insurance for 7 million children is presently in place. The bill is fully paid for by increasing the tax on cigarettes by 62 cents a pack, a change that also discourages smoking. "Given that many families that are struggling to make ends meet in today's economy, it is more important than ever to ensure that every child has access to health care. Rep. McNerney has supported multiple different versions of this legislation over the past two years. Unfortunately, the bill has not yet passed the Senate.